

R E M A R K S

The present Preliminary Amendment is submitted to delete the multiple dependency of claim 15 and add new claim 17, thereby placing such claims in condition for examination and reducing the required PTO filing fee.

Further, the specification has been amended in order to delete references to the claims. Also, abstract has been amended to comply with MPEP §608.01(b). No new matter has been added. The changes to the abstract are submitted in the form of a substitute abstract. A copy of the abstract with changes marked therein is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

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ABSTRACT

A device for ~~discharge-discharging~~ rod-like products each having one end that is large sized, ~~comprises~~ The device includes a hopper with an opening in its

- 5 bottom surface, a drive mechanism for oscillating the hopper, and a bottom cover for closing the opening of the hopper that oscillates. An upper surface of the bottom cover is shaped such that the cover closes the opening of the hopper that oscillates in a manner where the products do not drop from the opening. The bottom cover has a slit opened in the upper surface, and the slit extends in a direction perpendicular to a direction of the oscillating motion. The slit has a width that does not allow a maximum size portion of the rod-like products to pass through the slit but allows almost the entire part of each product to pass through the slit. ~~The drive mechanism oscillates the hopper so that the rod-like products received in the hopper are guided to the slit of the bottom cover, arranged in the slit in order, and discharged from the slit.~~
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